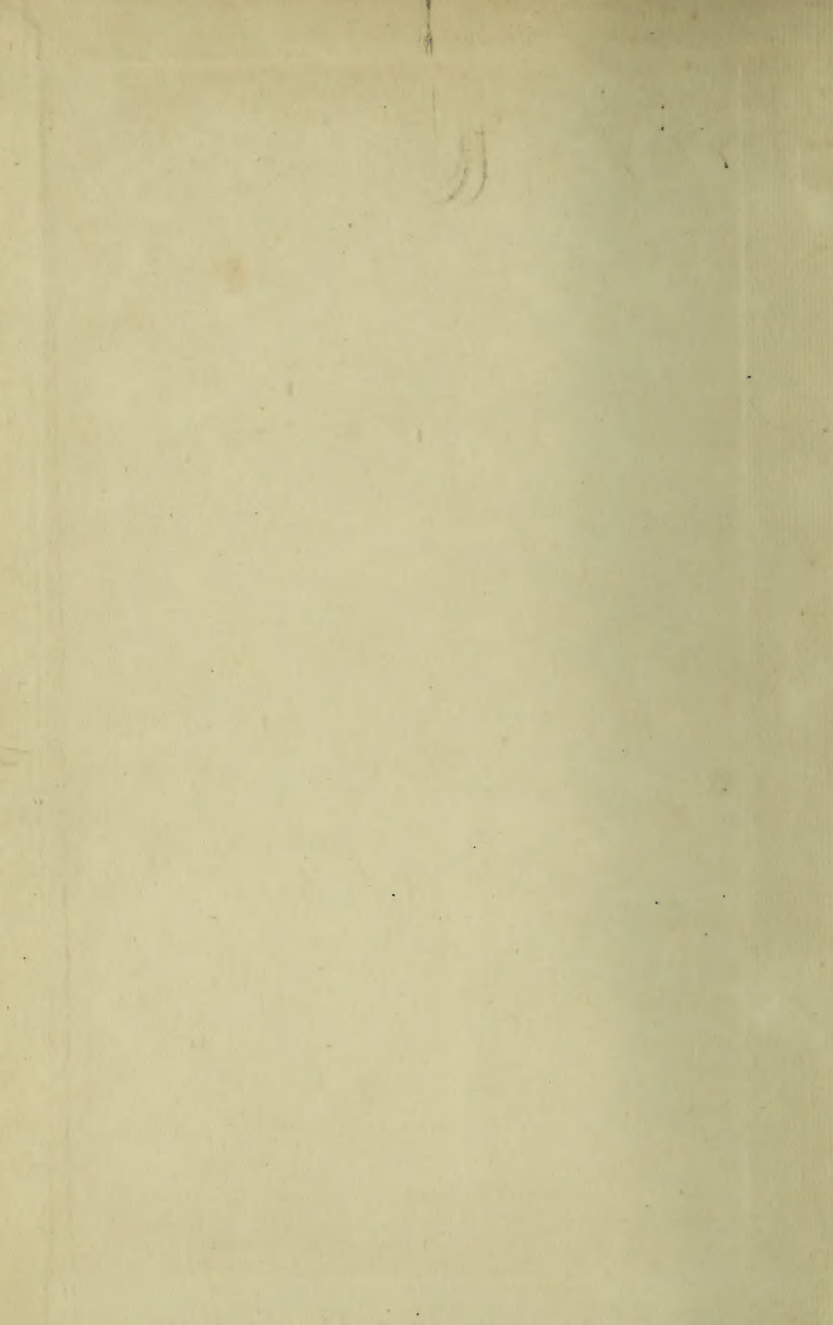


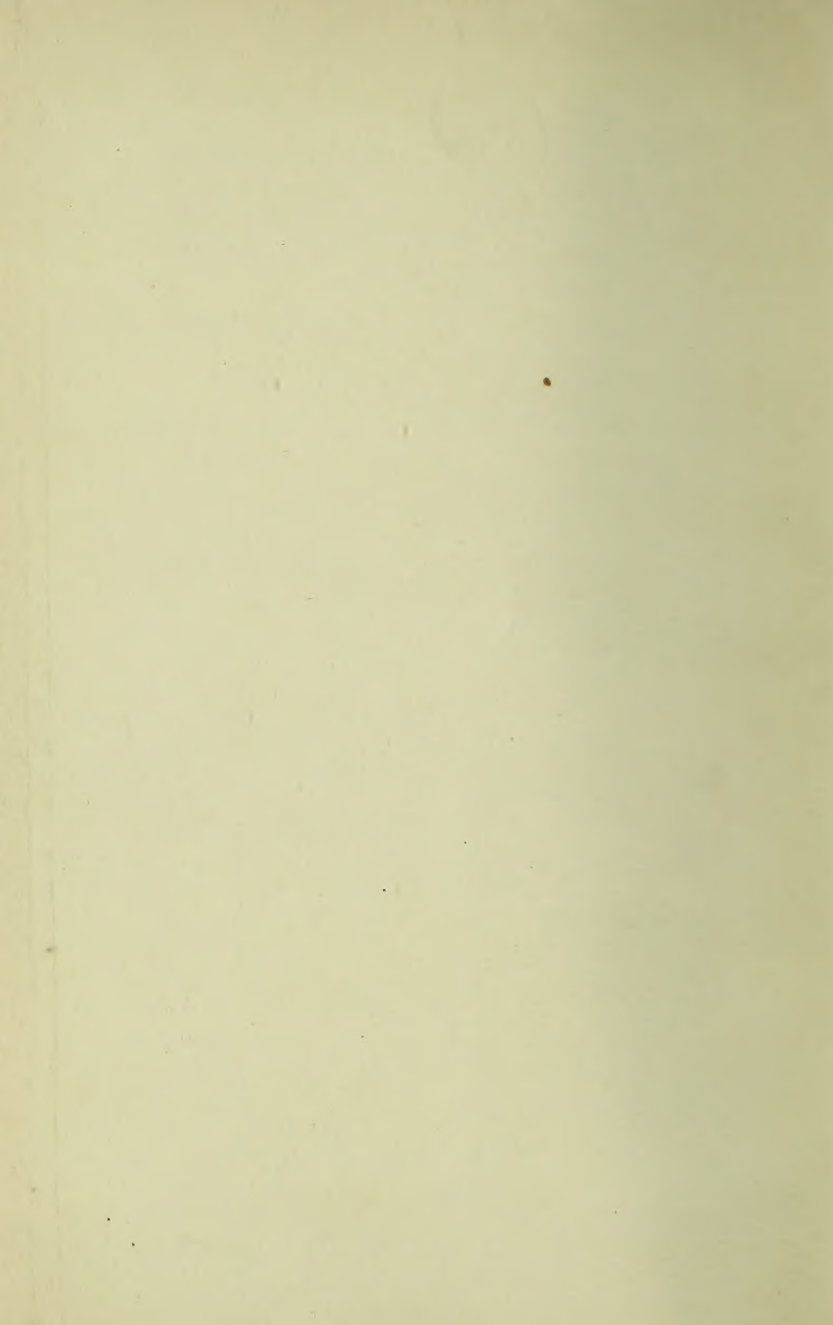
DISSENT
IN ENGLAND



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Dissent in England

A. C. Headlam
with the Author's best wishes
for Christmas & the new Century

Dissent in England

TWO LECTURES

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON, B.D.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD
CANON OF WESTMINSTER

I.—THE SITUATION UNDER ELIZABETH

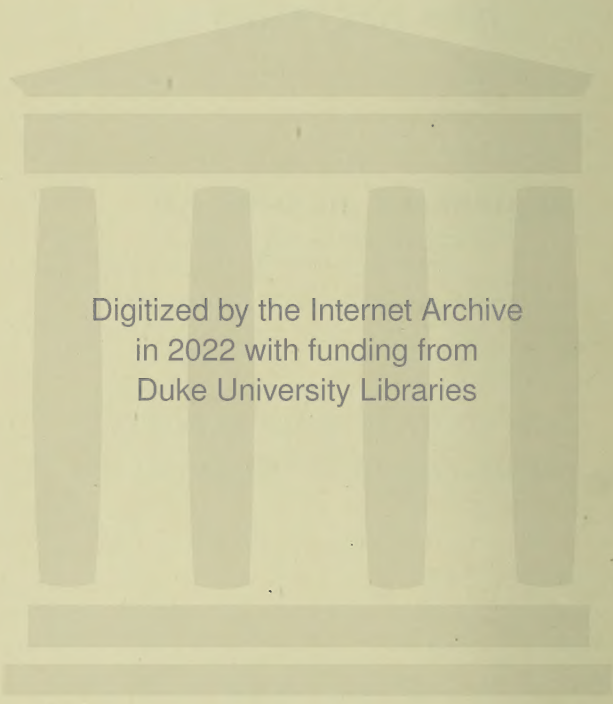
II.—THE HAMPTON COURT CONFERENCE, 1604

RIVINGTONS

34, KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN

LONDON

1900



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*To the Congregation which has worshipped
in the Chapel of St. Mary's Hospital,
Ilford, during the five years of my
Incumbency.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

My acceptance of a Canonry at Westminster Abbey necessarily involves the severance of the ties which have united us during the last five years. I desire to thank you all for your patience and loyalty. The difficult circumstances under which I first came to Ilford made a great demand on both those qualities, and in leaving Ilford, it is a pleasant duty to set on record the affectionate confidence which reigns between us.

The two lectures which are here printed represent, as you know, a small fragment of an undertaking which I had projected and announced. Perhaps at some future time I shall be able somewhere to resume and carry through the plan which must now for awhile be laid aside. I have printed what I said without alteration, because I desire both to present you with a faithful souvenir, and to bind over myself a strong obligation.

With all good wishes for your happiness in the future, and sincere thanks for your kindness in the past,

I am,

Yours most faithfully,

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

DISSENT IN ENGLAND

I.—THE SITUATION UNDER ELIZABETH.

*Delivered in the Chapel of St. Mary's Hospital, Ilford,
on October 7, 1900.*

IN asking you to undertake the consideration of Dissent in this country, I am in some sense making a new departure. The study of Church History is happily general, and I do not doubt that information on ecclesiastical affairs is now widely spread among us. I cannot honestly say that I am altogether satisfied with the popular Church Histories which we possess, for almost all are coloured by prepossessions which, however natural and

excusable, are not legitimate in the domain of history. But unquestionably there is no lack of excellent manuals of ecclesiastical history, such as the "Introduction to the History of the Church of England," by my lamented friend, the late Mr. Henry Wakeman, and the more recently published volume of my friend Mr. Hutton. If the "History of the English Church," edited by the Dean of Winchester and the Rev. William Hunt, maintains the high standard of excellence reached in the opening volume, the English Churchman will be well provided with sound knowledge as to the history of his branch of the Christian Society. I need not mention the numerous and excellent publications of the Church Historical Society. While, then, there is a general disposition to study Church History, I notice that there is, so far, very

little disposition to study the history of religion as a whole. Dissent in England has played so great a part in the life of the nation, that not even the most reluctant historian can altogether omit it from his record ; but scarcely any serious effort is made to set out the history of Dissent with the same care and justice as are bestowed on the history of the Church. There are, of course, Dissenting Histories of more or less merit, such as the "History of the Free Churches of England," by Messrs. Skeats and Miall, and there is a considerable literature treating of the history of particular denominations ; but, broadly, it is true that Dissenters are not well provided with information about themselves, that most of their books are sadly marked by anti-ecclesiastical prejudices, and that on their side, perhaps even more than on the side of

their traditional opponents, much mischief is worked through lack of knowledge. In justice, however, I must make one exception to this general statement. The late Dr. Stoughton's "History of Religion in England" is an admirable work, in design, in execution, and, above all, in spirit. It does not cover the whole ground, for it only starts with the opening of the Long Parliament, and draws rein at the end of the eighteenth century ; but it is the best general account of Dissenting History that I know.

It is not hard to see the causes which have tended to discourage the study of history among Dissenters. Their religious retrospect is a comparatively short one. The oldest Dissenting denominations cannot trace their existence beyond the religious Revolution of the sixteenth century ; and, for the most part,

it is to the period of the Commonwealth that the student of Dissenting History will find himself led for the origins of Dissent. The history of the nation for a thousand years has no religious interest for the Dissenter as such, whereas, of course, the Churchman finds that the farther he goes back in the history of England the larger is the prominence in which the Church appears on the page of history. Historic studies reduce the Reformation to an episode in the record of the Church of England ; it is the necessary starting-point for the history of Dissent. Moreover, since the Reformation, the main stream of national religion has run in the channel of the Church ; our religious literature, in spite of some splendid exceptions which we shall presently have to consider, has been the product of Churchmen ; the record of Dissent is a humble record of

obscure men, living outside the public interests of their time, driven in upon themselves by the hardships of their lot, ill provided with learning, narrowly restricted in their opportunities, not so interesting to the student of the past as their ecclesiastical contemporaries. Let no one think that all this reflects any discredit on the Dissenters. Discredit, if there be any, belongs to the established authorities of Church and State, which strove, by a long-continued policy of repression, to hinder the growth, restrict the opportunities, and hamper the education of the Dissenters. I only mention these circumstances of Dissenting History in order to explain the comparative neglect which it has received, even at the hands of Dissenters themselves. These very circumstances immensely enhance the religious significance of Dissent as we see it to-day. The

present greatness of the Christianity which had its origins in that obscure and unattractive record of English Dissent throws back on that record a new importance. The humble beginnings of religious movements are no safe guides to their intrinsic greatness : the modern Dissenter need not blush for his spiritual ancestry so long as he can point to the credentials of spiritual activity ; nevertheless, I apprehend that, both for himself and for others, it is no small misfortune that his family history is so little regarded.

At the close of the century we are much disposed to cast the horoscope of the nation and of the Church. Political prophecy, we know, is on the whole an employment less serviceable than interesting ; but there are some broad features of the religious outlook which cannot be wisely ignored, and prophecy

under the circumstances seems a task less dubious than inevitable. The most casual observer must see that the logic of facts is against the conventional assumptions of religious partisans. It may suit the necessities of our Church newspapers to ignore the existence of Dissent, and to speak of a Catholicism in which Dissent has no place ; but such an attitude and such a fashion of speech will be intolerable to the thoughtful Christian, who notes that half the Christianity of England, and three-fourths of the Christianity of the English race in America and Australia is either Dissenting or of the Dissenting type. We hear much enthusiastic talk about the reunion of Christendom ; but what reasonable Christian can contemplate a Christendom from which Dissenting Christians are excluded ? We hear wonderful things about the progress

of Anglicanism. I thank God from my heart for that progress; but I say that no less progress is made by that Dissenting Christianity which is the noblest offshoot of Anglicanism. Is it not folly, and worse, to indulge in day-dreams of denominational victory, which can only be conceived in ignorance and cherished in delusion? If I could have my way, I would insist on every Ordination candidate showing a fair knowledge of Dissenting History. I would say to him, "When you become the vicar or rector of a parish, you will find one-third or one-half, perhaps even more, of the parishioners organized into religious communities of their own, strongly and permanently organized, sometimes possessed of endowments, often possessed of large and substantial chapels, in which resident ministers, trained and appointed to their ministry, are

regularly engaged in an evangelistic and pastoral work. You ought to know something about those religious communities—what their principles are, and what their history has been ; why it is they have come to stand apart from the ancient parochial system which you represent.” I have, of course, no right to advise the Dissenting denominations, but I would respectfully submit that, if their ministers were in like manner required to have some sound knowledge of English Church History, the advantage to religion would be considerable ; for such mutual knowledge could not fail to induce a profound discontent with the existing situation. On both sides the salutary spirit of self-criticism would be developed, and that appalling self-contentment, which now on all hands stops the way of improvement, would be rendered impossible.

History would teach both Churchmen and Dissenters a large patience with the eccentricities of enthusiasm, a great suspicion of sectarian zeal, a dread of every approach to religious coercion, a deep respect for the Christian conscience, a very slight regard for denominational shibboleths. Where so much fault and folly is seen on both sides, the attitude of spiritual arrogance will be proper to neither; where so much personal devotion and sanctity is apparent in both camps, the notion of limiting the Christian name to one or other will seem absurd. In the light of history we can cancel ancient quarrels, and understand obstinate differences, and make allowance for prejudices, and revise standpoints, and release the present from the yoke of the past, and bring the past in to teach the present.

As some slight contribution to this desirable

end, I have invited you here to go with me through a course of lectures on the History of Dissent. I hope I shall be honoured by the presence of many Dissenters. They are very welcome here. I can promise them that I shall not wittingly or willingly offend them ; but I cannot promise them that everything I have to say will be agreeable. History is an impartial witness, and its testimony does not often match the interest of partisans. At least, they may be sure that Churchmen will have as good cause to complain as themselves. To both I can but promise to set out the facts honestly, and to interpret them fairly. The subject has interested me for many years. As long ago as 1885 Messrs. Methuen announced a volume on "Dissent in England" from my pen as in preparation ; but many obstacles, which I could

not then foresee, have hindered the work; and now, after fifteen years, I am able to give a more continuous attention to it, and I hope that, in the course of next year, if I live so long, it will make its appearance. You will not resent this personal information, which I advance as my apology for addressing you on the subject of Dissent at all. It remains that I should explain to you the method of my lectures, and make so much headway as the brief time at my disposal this afternoon will permit. I shall begin, then, by setting before you the religious condition of the country on the accession of Queen Elizabeth. That will occupy us to-day. On November 4 I hope to deal with the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, when the conflicting elements of English religion are clearly shown. On December 2 I shall

speak of the Westminster Assembly, and the attempt to domesticate Presbyterianism in England. On January 6 I shall deal with the period of the Commonwealth, with special reference to the rise of the Anabaptists and Independents. On February 3 I shall devote myself to the Quakers. On March 3 my subject will be the Savoy Conference; and on April 14 I shall give you an account of the Persecution under the Caroline Code. In May I shall speak of the movement which resulted in the Toleration Act; and in June I shall consider the history of the Dissenters during the last century. By that time, I make no doubt, you will be ready for your holidays.

Let me premise that I shall take for granted that all my hearers have a good general knowledge of the history of the Reformation, both on the Continent and in England,

Such knowledge is the indispensable preliminary to a serious study of English Dissent, but I cannot undertake here the task of providing it. In the brief time at our disposal I must confine myself to the subject before us, and assume that you already know all that is otherwise necessary.

The accession of Elizabeth on the death of her half-sister Mary, in November, 1558, is, perhaps, the best point at which to begin the history of Dissent. There had been congregations of dissenters from the national worship at an earlier period, but it was only then that the conditions out of which Dissent ultimately grew came into being. When Edward VI., as early as 1550, permitted John a Lasco to form a congregation of German refugees in the Augustinians' Church, the design was not to facilitate, but to hinder, separatism,

"It was appointed," writes the young king in his journal, "that the Germans should have the Austin Friars for their church, to have their service in, for avoiding all sects of Anabaptists and such like." The Government of Edward VI. had a lively dread of sectaries. Heresy was punished as severely as in the succeeding reign, only it was more liberally defined. We can understand how intolerant was the atmosphere of the time from this grim entry in the boy-king's journal: "A certain Arrian of the strangers, a Dutchman, being excommunicated by the congregation of his countrymen, was, after long disputation, condemned to the fire." Bishop Latimer makes several allusions to Anabaptists in the sermons he preached before Edward VI. They were evidently regarded with fear as anarchical fanatics, who would overturn

all constituted authority in Church and realm.

"I should have told you here," says Latimer, in 1549, "of a certain sect of heretics that speak against this order and doctrine; they will have no magistrates nor judges on the earth. Here I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and a worshipful man, of a town in this realm of England, that hath above five hundred heretics of this erroneous opinion in it, as he said."¹

We must remember that the memory of that terrible social rising, the Peasants' War, was still recent, that it was universally regarded as the proper consequence of the Anabaptist propaganda, that the enemies of the Reformation were never weary of accusing the Reformers of anarchic tendencies. England

¹ *Vide* Sermons, vol. i. p. 151 (Parker Society).

was then, as it has often been since, the natural refuge of the persecuted, and there was reason for the anxiety which moved the Government of Edward VI. to keep a strong hand over the foreign immigrants.

John a Lasco's superintendency extended over an Italian Church, and also over a French Church, both in London. There was a congregation of French Walloons at Glastonbury, under a separate superintendent, Valerandus Pollanus; and mention is also made of a Spanish congregation.¹ On Queen Mary's accession all foreigners were commanded to depart from the realm, and this legalized foreign Dissent came to a sudden end; but I have thought it worth while to recall the fact that so early as the reign of Edward VI. there were in the tolerated foreign congregations the earliest

¹ Strype's "Memorials of Cranmer," pp. 343, 346, 352.

examples of that Dissent from the national religion which was destined to become so large and important a factor in our national history. During the stern government of Queen Mary, congregations of Protestants assembled in London and elsewhere, and worshipped God according to the second Prayer-book of Edward VI.¹ The London congregation is placed at the head of the Nonconforming Churches in Wilson's "History and Antiquities of

¹ Bishop Jewell, writing to Peter Martyr in 1560, says that sectaries multiplied in spite of the Government during Mary's reign. "We found at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth a large and inauspicious crop of Arians, Anabaptists, and other pests, which I know not how, but as mushrooms spring up in the night and in darkness, so these sprung up in that darkness and unhappy night of the Marian times. These, I am informed, and hope it is the fact, have retreated before the light of purer doctrine, like owls at the sight of the sun, and are now nowhere to be found ; or, at least, if anywhere, they are no longer troublesome to our churches."—"Works," p. 1241, Parker Society.

Dissenting Churches," where we learn that the "meetings were held alternately near Aldgate, and Blackfriars, in Thames Street, and in ships upon the river ;" that sometimes the members "assembled in the villages about London, and especially at Islington, that they might the more easily elude the Bishop's officers and spies." The names of the ministers of this Dissenting congregation have been preserved : among them are those of Edmund Scambler and Thomas Bentham, both of whom afterwards became Elizabethan Bishops, the one of Peterborough and afterwards of Norwich, the other of Lichfield and Coventry. It could not have strengthened the hands of these prelates, when at a later stage they were required to take in hand the suppression of Puritanism, that they themselves had been sturdy Dissenters when the established system was not

to their taste. In any case, we have here a precedent of separatism which could not have been without effect, when the Puritans found themselves confronted with the difficult task of determining their attitude towards the Elizabethan Church. Most of the leading Reformers among the clergy fled to the Continent on the accession of Mary,¹ and there they presented an unedifying spectacle of division. The history of the exiles during Mary's reign is the key to the ecclesiastical difficulties of Elizabeth.² Let

¹ Archbishop Cranmer advised flight, though he would not fly himself. Strype prints a very beautiful letter on the subject, addressed by the Archbishop to one Mrs. Wilkinson, in which the objections to flight are combatted. Strype further states that the number of exiles was 800 and upwards (*vide* "Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer," p. 449).

² "The uncharitableness of the Lutherans on this occasion was very remarkable: they hated the exiles because they were Sacramentarians, and when any English came among them for shelter, they expelled

me sketch briefly what happened. The refugees from England, when they found protection at Frankfort, Strasburg, Geneva, Zürich, Basel, and other Protestant centres, were brought into close and continuous relationship with the Reformed Churches of Switzerland and Germany.¹ The influence of John Calvin (born 1509, died 1564) was then supreme. From the little city of Geneva—the whole population of which, perhaps, did not exceed 20,000 souls—this remarkable Frenchman exercised a dominion over Protestant Europe which

them their cities, so that they found little hospitality in Saxony and other places of Germany where Lutheranism was professed. Philip Melancthon interceded with the Senate on their behalf, but the clergy were so jealous for their consubstantiation, that they irritated the magistrates everywhere against them.”—Neal, “History of the Puritans,” i. 76.

¹ *Vide* Strype’s “Memorials of Cranmer,” vol. ii. p. 449; Neal, “History of the Puritans,” vol. i. p. 76.

profoundly affected the course of history. In 1536, when he was but twenty-seven years old, he published his famous work, the "*Institutio Religionis Christianæ*," which became the theological manual of aggressive Protestantism. Calvin had not merely restated Christianity in the terms of a rigorous logic: he had also created an alternative system of ecclesiastical government. Instead of the ancient Catholic order, with its apostolically ordained bishops, and its divinely constituted degrees of the ministry, he proposed the presbyterian system, which drew its strength from the free consent of the Church, and administered a severe and minute moral discipline. Thus he met the most urgent need of the moment. He gave to Protestantism the weapon it needed. He opposed the Divine right of the Papacy and episcopate with the Divine right of the

presbytery. He was the saviour of Protestantism not less truly than Ignatius Loyola was the saviour of the Papacy. Both men were the children of a desperate crisis, raised up to avert an imminent disaster. Calvin had established his authority in Geneva only after a protracted conflict with the citizens. His consistory of six ministers and twelve lay elders was "a thoroughly organized inquisition tribunal, which regulated in all details the moral, religious, domestic, and social life of the citizens, called them to account on every suspicion of a fault, had the incorrigible banished by the civil authorities, and the more dangerous of them put to death."¹

The execution of Servetus² for heresy in

¹ Kurtz, "Church History," vol. ii. p. 304.

² The execution was generally approved by the Reformers; see Bullinger to Calvin: "What is your most honourable Senate of Geneva going to do with that

1553 will always weigh heavily on Calvin's reputation; but it does not seem to me so significant as the normal severity of his government. In a period of but four years (1542-1546) there were, in Geneva, with a population, as I have said, about half that of Ilford, no less than fifty-seven death-sentences carried out with Calvin's approval, and seventy-six sentences of banishment. This was the system which met the English exiles as, with embittered hearts, they arrived from England. It matched their minds wonderfully. It made no terms with the old Catholic Church. It fought Rome with its own weapons; it waged war to the knife with the Papacy. As tidings

blasphemous wretch Servetus? If they are wise, and do their duty, they will put him to death, that all the world may perceive that Geneva desires the glory of Christ to be maintained inviolate" ("Original Letters," p. 742, Parker Society).

reached them from over-sea of the persecution of their friends, we can understand how they would have been disposed to cling the closer to Calvin's severe discipline, which represented the extremest possible contrast to Catholicism. They crowded to Geneva, and were enrolled among the most ardent supporters of the consistorial government. The republic admitted them to its citizenship, and they requited the kindness by a genuine affection. In 1555, when Calvin's predominance was endangered, their votes in the elections established him firmly in his supremacy, which he retained until his death in 1564. Nor did his influence end with his life. He bequeathed to his successor and disciple, Theodore Beza, the international position which he had won for himself.

The English refugees represented, of course, the most advanced Reformers of the English

Church; they had just succeeded in carrying through a revision of the Edwardian Prayer-book; and, at the time when the young king's early death brought all their plans to sudden overthrow, they were using the second Prayer-book of Edward VI. That Prayer-book reflected the influence of the learned foreigners, Peter Martyr and Martin Bucer, whom Cranmer had established in the English universities. It adopted a distinctly Zwinglian formula in the Communion Office, and still further simplified the ceremonies; but it was still, from the standpoint of the Calvinist Churches, a very unsatisfactory volume. How unsatisfactory it was the English Protestants had not realized until they found themselves actually face to face with the admired simplicity of Geneva. It was not surprising that many of them at

once discarded the Prayer-book, and adopted with eagerness the form of worship they found established among their co-religionists and protectors. There were, however, others who were otherwise minded. They had in some cases held high place in the Church of England; they were officially responsible for the Prayer-book; they could hardly with decency repudiate it as superstitious. The martyrdoms in England, especially those of the five bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and Ferar, created a profound sensation, and distinctly strengthened the hold of the Prayer-book on the affection of the exiles. It seemed a reflection on the martyrs, almost an insult to their memories, that their work should be so easily and even contemptuously laid aside. Moreover, considerations of prudence were not, perhaps, without effect on some minds. Queen

Mary's health was known to be bad, her government was known to be unpopular. The next sovereign would certainly inaugurate another change of policy, most probably a return to the Reformation. It was imprudent to compromise themselves in advance by denouncing what had but yesterday been the lawful system of the Church of England, and to-morrow might be so again. Some of the exiles compromised themselves most seriously by their extravagant abuse of Queen Mary, denouncing her not merely as an oppressive sovereign, but as disqualified for government by her sex. The latter contention was extremely difficult to explain to Queen Elizabeth's satisfaction, when that "monstre in nature, . . . a woman clad in the habit of man—yea, a woman against nature reigning above man,"¹

¹ *Vide* Maitland's "Essays on the Reformation."

as John Knox pleasantly said, was herself a sovereign.

Thus the English refugees fell into two camps in their land of exile. Part held together as the members of the Church of England, worshipped according to the Prayer-book, and defended the English system; part sought admission into the local Churches, which were generally Calvinist in doctrine and discipline, owned the leadership of Calvin and Bullinger, repudiated the Prayer-book, and denounced the English system as scarcely less objectionable than the Roman. At Frankfort these two parties came to open conflict. The first refugees belonged to the Puritan section. On their arrival, in June, 1554, they sought admission into the French Church, and subscribed the French Confession of Faith.¹

¹ This was the "Consensus Tigurinus," a formula

“After consultation among themselves, they concluded, by universal consent of all present, not to answer aloud after the minister, nor to use the Litany and surplice : but that the public service should begin with a general confession of sins ; then the people to sing a psalm in metre in a plain tune, after which the minister to pray for the assistance of God’s Holy Spirit, and so proceed to the sermon : after sermon a general prayer for all estates, and particularly for England, at the end of which was joined the Lord’s Prayer and the rehearsal of the articles of belief ; then the people were to sing another psalm, and the minister to dismiss them with a blessing. They took possession of their church July 29, 1554, and having chosen a minister and deacons to serve for the present, they sent to their brethren that were dispersed, to invite them to come to Frankfort, where they might hear God’s Word truly preached, the sacraments rightly ministered, and Scripture discipline used, agreed upon by Calvin and Bullinger, in 1549, with respect to the Lord’s Supper.

which in their own country could not be obtained." ¹

Soon, however, the colony at Frankfort heard that divers prominent ecclesiastics had arrived at Strasburg, Zürich, and Basel, led thither by the convenience of the libraries and printing-presses of those cities. To these, therefore, they sent, asking them to send divines to take charge of the English congregation, and adding that they had brought their religious system nearer to the policy and order of Scripture than the English Prayer-book. The Strasburg divines demurred to this; whereupon the Frankfort refugees sent to Geneva for Knòx, to Strasburg for Haddon, and to Zürich for Lever. These three—all strong Puritans—they elected for their ministers. They found, however, considerable opposition

¹ Neal's "History of the Puritans," vol. i. p. 77.

among the other exiles to their proceeding. The refugees at Zürich declined to join them unless the Prayer-book was used ; but the Frankfort folks would not give way. The refugees at Strasburg sent a strong deputation to plead for conformity, but with no better result. The matter was referred to Calvin, and he decided against the Prayer-book. In March, 1555, however, the controversy was rekindled by the arrival of a vigorous Anglican, Dr. Richard Cox, who at once started an active, and in the end successful, agitation for the use of the Prayer-book. He got rid of Knox by pointing out to the Frankfort magistrates some risky passages in his books, in which he compared the Emperor to Nero. More refugees arriving, Cox found himself in a majority, and gained permission from the magistrates to use the Prayer-book.

Then the victorious party addressed a letter to Calvin, justifying their conduct. It may be worth while to quote some portion of this letter. They excuse themselves for not consulting him before everything was concluded, and express their doubt whether their opponents have truthfully stated the facts. They disclaim any bigoted adherence to the English system.

“For when the magistrates lately gave us permission to adopt the rites of our native country, we freely relinquished all those ceremonies which were regarded by our brethren as offensive and inconvenient. For we gave up private baptisms, confirmation of children, saints’ days, kneeling at the Holy Communion, the linen surplices of the ministers, crosses, and other things of the like character. And we gave them up, not as being impure and papistical, which certain of our brethren often charged them with being: but whereas they were in

their own nature indifferent, and either ordained or allowed by godly fathers for the edification of our people, we notwithstanding chose rather to lay them aside than to offend the minds or alienate the affections of the brethren. We retain, however, the remainder of the form of prayer and of the administration of the Sacraments, which is prescribed in our book, and this with the consent of almost the whole Church, the judgment of which, in matters of this sort, we did not think should be disregarded.”¹

Of the ten signatories of this letter to Calvin, no less than four became subsequently bishops—Cox, Sandys, Grindal, and Bale.

Calvin's interference leading to no result, the defeated Puritans left Frankfort, and betook themselves to more congenial places. Fox, the martyrologist, and a small party went to Basel. Knox, with the larger party, went to Geneva, where, with the consent of the authorities, he

¹ *Vide* “Original Letters,” vol. ii. p. 753.

organized the English refugees into a Presbyterian Church after the Calvinist model.

I said that the history of the exiles was the key to the ecclesiastical difficulties of Elizabeth's reign. The sketch of that history which I have set before you will go far to justify the dictum. You can see the seeds of dissension already sown between the men who, by the force of circumstances, would have a leading place in the Elizabethan Church. The quarrels of the exiles were destined to be renewed and fought out within England. The contest at Frankfort over the use of the Prayer-book was prophetic of similar contests on a greater scale in many English towns. The defeat of the Puritans, and their definite adoption of an alien system, would be rehearsed in the subsequent history of the English Church. Elizabeth's misfortune was that she was forced to employ the most

inveterate of partisans to administer a national system. The deferential relation in which they had stood towards the Continental Reformers, and, above all, to Calvin, necessarily affected their conduct at a later stage. It explains the otherwise inexplicable fact that not only the Puritans, but also the bishops, appealed to Bullinger, Peter Martyr, and Beza for support during the tiresome conflict over the vestments and ceremonies. It explains the otherwise inexplicable influence wielded by Calvin within this island—that overwhelming influence against which Hooker raised his protest.

“Of what account the Master of Sentences was in the Church of Rome, the same and more amongst the preachers of reformed Churches Calvin had purchased; so that the perfectest divines were judged they which were skilfullest in Calvin’s writings. His books almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline

by. French Churches, both under others abroad and at home in their own country, all cast according to that mould which Calvin had made. The Church of Scotland, in erecting the fabric of their Reformation, took the self-same pattern. Till at length the discipline, which was at the first so weak, that without the staff of their approbation, who were not subject unto it themselves, it had not brought others under subjection, began now to challenge universal obedience, and to enter into open conflict with those very Churches which in desperate extremities had been relievers of it."¹

At the accession of Elizabeth, in November, 1558, the Roman Catholic system was fully established, and the Queen made no haste to abolish it. She was crowned with the ceremonial of the unreformed Church; she straitly prohibited all attacks, in the pulpit or elsewhere, on the existing *régime*. Her attitude

¹ "Eccles. Pol.," Preface, ii. 8.

was eminently well-chosen to discourage Protestant zeal and to calm Catholic apprehensions. This dubious attitude was dictated by necessity ; for the weakness of the new Government was manifest. It is a common error to suppose that there was any general dislike of the mediæval Church among the people. Except in London and the home counties (as we call them now), and East Anglia, the Reformation had but little hold on the nation. The barbarities of the Marian persecution had created a revulsion of feeling which helped the Reformers, but their own misdeeds under Edward VI. had not been forgotten, and far into Elizabeth's reign a great part of the population in the north and west remained attached to the old religion. It is true that the mass of the clergy accepted the changes, drastic though they were, effected by the Act of Uniformity ; but we have no lack

of evidence to show that their acceptance was too often perfunctory and insincere. Foreign intervention in defence of the Roman Catholics was no unlikely contingency, and the Queen's diplomacy would not push matters to extremities. Moreover, we may not forget her singular personality. Elizabeth was, for her sex and station, a learned woman. Like her formidable father, she prided herself on her theological knowledge; and, like him, she combined a reasoned rejection of the Papacy with a strong dislike of Protestant individualism.

The force of circumstances constituted Elizabeth the leader of the Protestant cause in Europe; but she, none the less, disliked the Puritans, and was not careful to conceal the fact. Her ecclesiastical government resolved itself into a warfare with Puritanism, in which

her own bishops were, so far as was possible, against her. In that warfare the Queen undoubtedly had the bulk of the nation behind her, and, on the whole, history has approved her attitude; but, at the time, to the eager Reformers just returned from exile, enthusiastic admirers of the thorough-going Protestantism of Geneva, and full of the resolve to purge the Church of England without delay from all taint of superstition, we can easily understand that the Queen's prudence was inexplicable and exasperating. The origin of English Dissent is not, as is too often asserted, the corruption and fault of the English clergy: it lies deep in the conditions of the Reformation. It was inevitable that the conservative, national tendency, represented by the Queen, and expressed in the ecclesiastical settlement, should come into open opposition with the innovating

individualist tendency represented by the returned Puritans. This general cause was allied with a particular cause arising from the deplorable state of the Church during the early years of the reign. In Geneva, as we have seen, the exiles had seen and admired a vigorous working system of moral discipline; in England they found a state of moral chaos. The rapid and violent changes of the preceding generation had been very unfavourable to the national morality, and the clergy, beyond all others, had suffered. All our evidence points to the conclusion that the first consequence of the religious revolution was a frightful declension in the national morals. We cannot read the literature of the time, whether Protestant or Catholic, without noting this. The destruction of the monasteries had most seriously affected the arrangements for providing, educating, and

maintaining the clergy. It is certain that the Church was under-manned and badly served throughout Elizabeth's reign. In order to provide for some continuous religious service in many parishes, the bishops were compelled to authorize the ministrations of unordained men as readers. You will best gather the nature of the necessity, and the type of the men thus set at work in many districts, from the following letter addressed by Archbishop Parker to Bishop Grindal of London, in August, 1560:—

“Whereas, occasioned by the great want of ministers, we and you both, for tolerable supply thereof, have heretofore admitted unto the ministry sundry artificers and others, not traded and brought up in learning, and, as it happened in a multitude, some that were of base occupations: forasmuch as now by experience it is seen that such manner of men, partly by reason of their former profane arts, partly by their light behaviour otherwise and trade of life, are

very offensive unto the people, yea, and to the wise of this realm are thought to do great deal more hurt than good, the Gospel there sustaining slander ; these shall be to desire and require you hereafter to be very circumspect in admitting any to the ministry, and only to allow such as, having good testimony of their honest conversation, have been traded and exercized in learning, or at the least have spent their time with teaching of children, excluding all others which have been brought up and sustained themselves either by occupation or other kinds of life alienated from learning.”¹

Rules were laid down for these readers : they were required to pledge themselves not to preach, administer the Holy Communion, or baptize, but to read the Common Prayer and keep the registers.² They were ordered to “use sobriety in apparel, and especially in the

¹ “Correspondence of Archbishop Parker,” p. 120 (Parker Society).

² *Vide* Strype, “Annals,” p. 306.

Church," to "read daily at the least one Chapter of the Old Testament and one other of the New, with good advisement, to the encrease of their knowledge," and to hold themselves ready to leave the parish when required. It is, perhaps, worthy of our notice that the English people had thus been familiarized with the religious ministrations of laymen. When, at a later period, discontent with the established system took the form of active Dissent, the public conscience was not greatly shocked by the spectacle of unordained preachers; the Church was unconsciously paving the way of Dissent.

Preaching was then the principal function of the ministry, for the Reformation had almost destroyed every other. The abolition of private Masses, and the almost total cessation of the practice of private confession, had taken from

the clergy their principal employment. There were no more pilgrimages ; most of the saints' days ceased to be observed ; the Sacrament was no longer reserved in the churches. Popular interest in religion largely ceased, and reverence seemed to have died out of the land. Preaching was the only substitute for all that had been swept away. Sermons were unquestionably popular, and psalm-singing, as soon as it was started, attracted the people wonderfully. Bishop Jewell, writing in 1560, gives to Peter Martyr a striking account of the situation in London :—

“ Religion is somewhat more established than it was. The people are everywhere exceedingly inclined to the better part. The practice of joining in church music has very much conduced to this. For, as soon as they had once commenced singing in public, in only one little church in London, immediately not only the

churches in the neighbourhood, but even the towns far distant, began to vie with each other in the same practice. You may now sometimes see at Paul's Cross, after the sermon, six thousand persons, old and young, of both sexes, all singing together, and praising God." ¹

Preachers, then, were in great demand. They were needed for the defence of the religious changes : they were needed for the satisfaction of the spiritual needs of a growing religious public, which had no other notion of religion than that of hearing the Word. But here the Government had to face the fact that nearly all the preachers were Puritans ; that their polemical ardour could not be confined within safe bounds ; that, once started on a sermon, they gave free play to the vehement scorn with which they regarded the cautious ecclesiastical

¹ " Works of Bishop Jewell," p. 1231 (Parker Society).

policy of the Queen. In 1562 the Bishop of Exeter laid before the Convocation a paper containing his "judgment for doctrine and discipline." From that paper I take the following account of the Puritan preachers, which shows the difficulty of the position :—

"For matters ecclesiastical which be indifferent, there be some preachers which cannot abide them, but do murmur, spurn, kick, and very sharply do inveigh against them, naming them things of Iniquity, Devilish, and papistical: namely, I know one preacher, not of the basest sort nor estimation, which did glory and boast that he made eight sermons in London, against Surplices, Rotchetts, Tippetts, and Caps, counting them not to be perfect that do wear them."¹

Elizabeth cannot be blamed for prohibiting preachers of this type; but it is sufficiently

¹ Strype's "Annals," p. 309.

evident that their suppression would be greatly resented. When the Church lay desolate—many parishes wholly destitute of religious ministrations, many served by readers of whom not a few were illiterate, or scandalous, or both at once,—it seemed intolerable to silence able and earnest preachers because they held strong opinions about such trifling matters as vestments and ceremonies. It is certain that the Queen's vigorous policy was disapproved and lamented by the bishops, whose sympathies were on the side of the Puritans; but the Queen knew what the nation would stand better that the prelates, and in the sequel her wisdom was demonstrated.

It is hard for us to sympathize with the Puritans; but let us be just. Parker, Grindal, Jewell, and their contemporaries were among the wisest men of their time, and they shared

to the full the vehement antipathy to everything that savoured of Rome. Bishop Jewell was the most prominent and, perhaps, the ablest champion of the Elizabethan Church; his famous "Apology" ranked with Fox's "Book of Martyrs," the Books of Homilies, the Prayer-book, and the Bible, as one of the indispensable possessions of every parish clergyman; yet he desired to abolish even the surplice. The dread of Rome, which inspired this excessive reluctance to have any points of resemblance, was not without justifications in that age. Remember that, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the overwhelming political superiority of Catholicism was as plain as the weakness of Catholicism is at present; that the Papacy, in alliance with the Catholic sovereigns, had embarked on a holy war against Protestantism; that there was good cause for

thinking that victory would follow the attempt. In 1567 the Duke of Alva was beginning his ever-memorable career in the Netherlands, at the close of which he boasted that, in the six years of his government, he had sent 18,000 persons to the executioner, beside the multitudes whom he had slain in war. In 1572 the massacre of the French Protestants took place on St. Bartholomew's Day. Imagine the consternation in England when the tidings came that more than 50,000 persons had been perfidiously massacred by the orders of their own sovereign, solely because they were Protestants. Soon the fugitives began to arrive on these shores. It was well understood on all hands that the French massacres were but part of the grand attempt to stamp out the Reformation. The Pope celebrated the event with a solemn procession as a notable religious victory

Archbishop Parker wrote to Lord Burleigh that there was rejoicing among the English Roman Catholics.¹ There were real grounds for the terror with which Englishmen generally regarded Rome. The Queen's dislike to the Puritans, and her firm insistence on the Anglican ceremonies, seemed strangely perverse to her best subjects. We shall be unjust if we forget the complex and difficult circumstances of the time.

This brief review of the ecclesiastical situation in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign explains the origin of Dissent. No human wisdom could have united in the National Church its historic elements and the vehement radicalism of the Puritans. The Reformation was a twofold movement. It was a new birth, the release of hitherto latent forces, the

¹ Parker's "Correspondence," p. 399.

opening of a wider horizon to Christendom. The nations which accepted the Reformation became the heirs of the future ; and, in spite of the dreadful sacrifices involved in their breach with the traditional system, they have more and more approved their decision in experience. But the Reformation was also a reaction provoked by the long-standing and grievous corruptions of Christendom—a reaction which was inflamed to frenzy by the circumstances of the time. The Puritans embodied this aspect of the Reformation in its extreme form. Now, history does not report well of reactions. They partake too much of the character of Nemesis to be themselves satisfactory. At the time they carry all before them ; they sweep away in indiscriminating resentment the good as well as the bad features of the system which gives them birth. They look worst in the

retrospect ; their justifications are always in the actual conditions of the time. There was no necessary connection between vestments and ceremonies and the atrocities of Alva or the fires of Smithfield, but they seemed to be in alliance ; and men in panic, men who had suffered, men who were witnesses of those appalling iniquities, may be pardoned if they failed to distinguish between the accidental and the essential, and pressed for a total abolition of "the very vestiges of error."

It is true that the Elizabethan Puritans were not technically Dissenters, only Nonconformist members of the National Church.¹ The first

¹ "Is it not," asks Coleridge, "an historical error to call the Puritans Dissenters? Before St. Bartholomew's Day they were essentially a part of the Church, and had as determined opinions in favour of a Church establishment as the bishops themselves."—"Table Talk," p. 96.

avowed Dissenters were those Anabaptist sectaries, of whom the Puritan clergy were wont to speak with such aversion. It is true that the conflict within the National Church between the conservative national element and the innovating Puritan element, was protracted through several generations, and has lingered on even to our own time ; but the main course of the Puritan movement, and its natural development have been outside the National Church in the sphere of historic Dissent. So long as there seemed a probability that the national system could be captured, the Puritans themselves bent all their energies in that direction ; they either did not realize or would not face the tendency of their principles ; they maintained an attitude of contemptuous dislike towards the sectaries ; but events were too strong for them. The patriotism of the people,

kindled to an enthusiasm by the successful war with Spain, strengthened the Church of England, and stamped on the Puritans the character of bad citizens. The numerous refugees from the Continent brought a bolder spirit of ecclesiastical experiment into the scene. The Puritans were perplexed and compromised by the new sectaries, who, while adopting their principles, pushed them to different and more logical conclusions. Dissent was the legitimate expression of Puritanism, and Puritanism had its origin in the very conditions of the Reformation.

In the Hampton Court Conference, with which I propose to deal in the next lecture, we reach a landmark in the evolution of Non-conformity into Dissent. We shall then have an excellent opportunity for inquiring into the actual principles of the Puritans, and

estimating how far there was any real possibility that they could be reconciled to a Church which clung with such pertinacity to the historic bases of her politico-ecclesiastical constitution.

II.—THE HAMPTON COURT CONFERENCE, JANUARY 14, 16, 18, 1604.

*Delivered in the Chapel of St. Mary's Hospital, Ilford,
on November 4, 1900.*

THE closing years of Elizabeth's long reign were comparatively peaceful. The Queen had made plain enough her determination to admit no changes in the ecclesiastical system. The mass of the nation was not actively hostile to the Church, and, though there was much sympathy with the Puritans, and a general desire to conciliate them, there was a prevailing sense that they ought to accept the established arrangements, and not endanger the peace of the community by an obstinate insistence on points which could not be seriously regarded

as of primary importance. The Puritans themselves were biding their time. The next monarch seemed pledged in advance to their cause. James, it was thought, could hardly adopt an attitude of hostility towards men whose ideal of ecclesiastical government was that Presbyterian system established in his native Scotland. The anxiety of the bishops was scarcely less evident than the expectation of the Puritans. On all hands it was felt that the new King's accession would inaugurate an epoch of change. The *régime* of rigid uniformity seemed destined to die with the old Queen.

Early on the morning of March 24, 1603, Elizabeth passed to her account. In the long series of English sovereigns there is none whose name has been held in greater honour. Her faults of character and conduct were

sufficiently obvious. She was vain, false, fickle, and cruel ; but she had great qualities, and a curiously just perception of her duty. It is much to say, and yet nothing less will satisfy the witness of history, that in that wonderful epoch, when in every direction the latent forces of English nationhood were bursting into view, in the age of Spenser, Shakespeare, Sydney, Hooker, Raleigh, Cecil, and many others whose names are for ever honourable in the record of England, Elizabeth was worthy to stand at the head of the English people, and guide the course of its destinies. The Church of England owes more to the great Queen than to any other individual. If the mighty reaction embodied in Puritanism did not have free course in this country, the principal credit is hers. To her, under God, we owe the preservation of those historic elements which give

its distinguishing character to our reformed Church. Our Prayer-book, as we have it, is her gift. Our tradition of theological liberty is the impress of her character. If we are able to exult in the Catholic heritage which as English Churchmen we have received in the Church of our fathers, we owe it, in the providence of God, chiefly to the great Queen.

Let me observe in passing how notable an influence in our ecclesiastical history has been the character of our sovereigns. Of the Tudors this is too obvious to be missed by any. The fact is scarcely less obvious in the case of the Stuarts. James I. was an unknown quantity when he ascended the English throne at the age of thirty-seven. His relations with the Presbyterian Church in his native kingdom had never been amicable or easy. He was known to desire the restoration of bishops; he was

suspected of leaning towards papistry ; but he had given little indication as yet of his theological interests, and it seemed improbable that he would alienate his Scottish subjects by any marked favour to the Church of England. Both bishops and Puritans hastened to gain his ear ; the latter were first in the field, but the former obtained the best reception.¹ On

¹ The ministers of the Synod of Lothian met the King above Haddington, and presented a petition, asking, among other things, "for releefe of good brethrein of the ministrie of England." James replied "that he was not minded at the first to urge anie alteratioun. As for Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Travers, and some others, he understoode they were at freedome. He would show favour to honest men, but not to Anabaptists." At Berwick, "Johne Matthew, Bishop of Durhame, mett him with his rotchet and corner cappe ;" but some Scotch ministers who met him a short distance from the town "were bidden depart, without anie further speeche."—Calderwood's "Historie of the Kirk of Scotland," vol. vi. pp. 222, 223.

It is clear that the Scotch clergy were fully alive to the importance of the occasion ; see Sir Patrick Murray's letter to "Maister Selbie," written from Winchester

his progress towards London he was met by a deputation of Puritan ministers, who presented to him a lengthy statement of their grievances in a document which is known as the Millenary Petition. As this document was the immediate

October 12, 1603: "We are much bound to Mr. Patrick Galloway for his constancie in the behalf of the caus. I am ashamed of the backwardnesse of the ministers to further their owne caus. The diligence of the adverse party is incredible. I have no acquaintance northward but with yourself, Mr. Mortoun, and the Bp. of Carlill. I pray you be carefull to send all the ministers and gentlemen weill affected, to further this businesse. I feare most the slownesse of the north parts. If it be so I will blame you. The great touns sould bring in their petitionous by themselves. You may doe weill to send into Scotland, that there may be petitionous from all the presbytereis to the king, in the behalfe of the ministers of England. . . . I would the Scotch presbytereis w^d be petitioners, that our bps. might be like theirs in authoritie, though they keepe their livings. The king is resolved to have a preaching ministrie, to mitigat subscription, and to restore the censures of the kirk *ad integram*. All the ministers of England are advertised of the project against the conference, and are resolved to send the survey to the king's majestie."—*Ibid.*, pp. 234, 235.

cause of the Conference at Hampton Court, and as it contains a detailed and authoritative exposition of the Puritan position, it will be worth our while to examine it.

The ministers describe themselves "as the faithful servants of Christ, and loyal subjects to his Majesty, desiring and longing for the redress of divers abuses of the Church," who, although for many reasons they had reluctantly subscribed the Prayer-book, were "all groaning as under a common burden of human rites and ceremonies," and therefore besought his Majesty for relief. They then set out, under four heads, the articles of their complaint.

The first dealt with the Church service; the next with Church ministers; the third with Church property; and the fourth with Church discipline. They concluded with a further request that they might, either by writing or

in conference, be permitted to show that the abuses named in the petition and others were "not agreeable to the Scriptures." The strength and the weakness of the Puritan position are well shown in this statement of their case. Their fundamental principle was the appeal to Scripture, but when we consider the actual matters at issue, it is manifest that the appeal to Scripture could not be reasonably made. They were attributing to Scripture a character which it did not claim and could not sustain, when they looked to it for the authoritative determination of the order and ceremonies of Christian worship, and the details of ecclesiastical discipline. Imagine finding in the Bible authority for such demands as these—

"That the Cross in baptism, interrogatories ministered to infants, Confirmation, as super-

fluous, may be taken away; baptism not to be ministered by women, and so explained; the cap and surplice not urged; that examination may go before the Communion; that it be ministered with a sermon; that divers terms of priests and absolution, and some other used, with the ring in marriage, and other such-like in the Book, may be corrected; the longsomeness of service abridged; Church songs and music moderated to better edification; that the Lord's day be not profaned, the rest upon holydays not so strictly urged; that there may be an uniformity of doctrine prescribed; no popish opinion to be any more taught or defended; no ministers charged to teach their people to bow at the Name of Jesus; that the canonical Scriptures only be read in the Church."

They were on stronger ground when they dealt with matters of practical importance.

"That none hereafter be admitted into the ministry but able and sufficient men; and those

to preach diligently, and especially upon the Lord's day; that such as be already entered and cannot preach may either be removed, and some charitable course taken with them for their relief; or else to be forced, according to the value of their livings, to maintain preachers; that non-residency be not permitted; that King Edward's statute for the lawfulness of ministers' marriage be revived; that ministers be not urged to subscribe, but, according to the law, to the Articles of Religion, and the King's supremacy only."

Here we notice the exaggerated importance which the Puritans attached to preaching, and the impossible demand that ministers should be freed from subscription to the Prayer-book—impossible, because, if conceded, the whole conduct of public worship would have been left to the caprice of individual ministers, an arrangement which could only have worked out in scandalous confusion.

Their objections to commendams, pluralities, non-residence, and impropriations were universally admitted to be intrinsically just ; but they did not sufficiently allow for the extreme difficulty which then, as now, was caused by the poverty of the benefices. Their complaints in the matter of Church discipline were certainly well-founded, but they greatly weakened their case by suggesting, not obscurely, that the Presbyterian system was divinely instituted. On this point, too, they would most easily come into collision with the King, who cherished a personal resentment against the democratic *régime* of the Kirk.

This statement of the Puritan demands was not the only document which the King had received. The greatest thinker of the time, Lord Bacon, had placed in his hands a paper entitled, " Certain considerations touching the

better pacification and edification of the Church of England.”¹ It was not the first appearance of the writer in the vexed region of ecclesiastical politics. In 1589, when the Marprelate controversy was at its height, Bacon drew up “an advertisement touching the controversies of the Church of England,” which is a masterly and luminous review of the situation from the standpoint of a broad-minded, religious statesman. These two papers may be taken to express the view of cultivated Englishmen. The substantial justifications of Puritanism are admitted, while its unreasonable insistence on secondary matters, its arbitrary temper, its excessive deference to foreign models, its anarchic tendencies, are denounced. Bacon saw clearly that the unyielding attitude

¹ *Vide* Spedding, “Letters and Life of Francis Bacon,” vol. i. p. 74 ff.; vol. iii. p. 103.

of the Queen could not be maintained against the waxing force of Puritanism. Some concessions must be made if the disaster of revolution was to be averted. The accession of a new monarch, untrammelled by his past conduct, personally disconnected with both the opposing parties, seemed to provide an excellent opportunity for revising the ecclesiastical settlement in the interest of peace, making terms with the Puritans, and drawing into the service of the National Church their devotion and ability.

Bacon begins by affirming the need of reformation and the suitableness of the time for it. Then he points out the "two circumstances in the administration of bishops" wherein he could never be satisfied: the one, the sole exercise of their authority; the other, the deputation of their authority. He particularly

censures the *ex-officio* oath, "whereby men are enforced to accuse themselves, and (that that is more) are sworn unto blanks, and not unto accusations and charges declared." Then he passes to the Liturgy, the ceremonies, and subscription. He steers a middle way between the bishops and the Puritans.

"It is good to take example, how that the best actions of the worship of God may be extolled excessively and superstitiously. As the extolling of the Sacrament bred the superstition of the Mass. The extolling of the Liturgy and prayers bred the superstition of the monastical orders and oraisons. And so no doubt preaching likewise may be magnified and extolled superstitiously, as if all the whole body of God's worship should be turned into an ear."

He would conciliate the Puritans by dropping the word "priest" as misleading, and

omitting the Absolution except in cases of previous excommunication. He suggests that Confirmation had been wrongly connected with Baptism, being properly preparative to Holy Communion; that private baptism by women or lay persons was indefensible; that the ring in marriage was scarcely worthy of that solemn service; that music in churches might with advantage be regulated. He would not enforce the cap and surplice to the loss of good ministers who held them to be superstitious, "the rather because the silencing of ministers by this occasion is (in this scarcity of good preachers) a punishment that lights upon the people as well as upon the party." The object of subscription being "to bind in the unity of faith," it was best secured by urging subscription "rather for articles of doctrine than for rites and ceremonies and points of outward

government." He then deals with the urgent question of preaching ministers. He begins by some sage reflections on the mischiefs attending the Puritan admiration of preachers.

"For while they inveigh against a dumb ministry, they make too easy and too promiscuous an allowance of such as they account preachers, having not respect enough to years, except their gifts be extraordinary; not respect enough to their learnings in other arts, which are handmaids to divinity; not respect enough to the gift itself, which many times is none at all. For God forbid, that every man that can take unto himself boldness to speak an hour together in a church upon a text, should be admitted for a preacher, though he mean never so well."

To improve the quality of preachers he suggests the revival and regulation of the religious exercises known as "prophesyings," which Elizabeth had suppressed, against the advice

of Archbishop Grindal, and an improvement in the bishops' examinations of Ordination candidates. To meet the case of the parishes for whom no preachers could be provided, he would permit a certain measure of itinerancy. He speaks strongly about the existing abuses in the matter of excommunication, non-residents, and pluralities, and makes divers proposals for relieving the poverty of the benefices.

King James was in many respects well qualified for the *rôle* which Bacon proposed to him. He was totally free from fanaticism, naturally averse to severe measures, a sincere lover of peace, and a genuinely religious man. He was, moreover, really learned, and the personal part in religious discussions which he took was not altogether without excuse in his theological knowledge. Against these qualifications must be set two broad disadvantages.

James was inordinately vain. The curious vanity of the pedant was in his case united with the normal pride of kingship. No monarch was ever more easily the victim of flatterers, and in the art of flattery the bishops were better skilled than the Puritans. James was also extremely vindictive where his vanity had been wounded; and he had suffered many humiliations at the hands of the Scottish presbyters. He saw in the Puritans the same independent carriage, and heard from them the same language of exorbitant religious pretension. They waked his fears, while they wounded his pride. Thus there was a conflict of tendencies in the King's mind. His deliberate judgment disposed him to accept the prudent counsels of Bacon; his well-instructed intelligence enabled him to estimate very justly the Puritan complaints; but the sycophancy of the English

Court was infinitely grateful to him ; he enjoyed the adulation of the English prelates ; and could not refuse himself the double satisfaction of overcoming the Puritans in argument, and trampling on them in an unquestioned supremacy.

On July 25, 1603, the King was crowned at Westminster with the accustomed rites. The Church and the monarchy are never so closely united as in that solemn ceremony of Coronation. The Oath¹ administered to the sovereign by the Archbishop of Canterbury pledges him to the championship of the National Church. Archbishop Whitgift was not the man to allow the full meaning of the royal promises to be obscured, nor was James the man to underrate it. The Conference,

¹ *Vide* Taylor's "Glory of Regality," p. 329, where the Oath is printed,

asked for in the Millenary Petition, and originally, perhaps, designed to be a genuine conference on equal terms between the bishops and the Puritans, gradually changed its character, until, when it actually met at Hampton Court in January, 1604, there was no longer any pretence of equal treatment. The Puritans were made to feel from the outset that the case was already decided against them; that they were unreasonable people, to whom the royal clemency deigned to give audience; that the aim of the Conference was not the satisfaction of their demands, but the demonstration of their wrong-headedness. The Elizabethan policy of repression was to be affirmed, facilitated, and continued.

On Saturday, the 14th of January, about eleven o'clock, the members of the Conference

assembled at Hampton Court.¹ The Church was represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury and eight bishops, eight deans, and two lesser dignitaries; the Puritans were represented by only four divines—Reynolds, Sparks, Knewstubs, and Chaderton, who were, how-

¹ The members of the Conference, according to Fuller, were—

Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bancroft, Bishop of London.

Matthews, Bishop of Durham.

Bilson, Bishop of Winchester.

Babington, Bishop of Worcester.

Rudd, Bishop of S. David's.

Watson, Bishop of Chichester.

Robinson, Bishop of Carlisle.

Dove, Bishop of Peterborough.

The Dean of the Chapel.

„ Christ Church.

„ Worcester.

„ Westminster (Andrewes).

„ St. Paul's (Overall).

„ Chester (Barlow).

„ Salisbury (Bridges).

„ Windsor.

Dr. Field.

Dr. King.

ever, accompanied by a large party of their friends.¹

The inequality in numbers would in any case have seriously handicapped the Puritans ; but pains were taken to impress on them from the first the consciousness of inferiority. On the first day they were not admitted at all.

¹ The authorities for the Conference are these—

1. Barlow, "Sum and Substance of the Conference," printed in "Phenix," i. pp. 139-177.

2. Montague, Letter to his Mother, "Winw. Mem.," ii. p. 13.

3. Galloway, Letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, *apud* Calderwood, "Historie of the Kirk of Scotland," vol. vi. p. 241.

4. Matthews, Letter printed in Strype's "Whitgift," App. xlv.

5. Fuller, "Church History of Britain."

6. Beaulieu MSS., Paper of Instructions to the Puritan Divines, with a Synopsis of the Arguments. From this paper it appears that five ministers were "Ministers of the Conference;" two "at their Conference and in place;" and no less than twenty-seven "at, but not in place."

The King called in the bishops and deans, and held a private discussion with them. He began by making "a very admirable speech, of an hour long at least." Barlow, whose account of the Conference is our main source of information, reports the royal oration at some length.

As it indicates the King's attitude, it will be worth our while to make a brief quotation. He began by stating that in calling the Conference he was but following the example of all Christian princes, who, in the commencement of their reign, usually take the first course for the establishing of the Church, that he had no design of changing anything that was well established, but only to confirm that which he found well settled already.

"Which state, as it seemed, so affected his royal heart, that it pleased him both to enter into a gratulation to Almighty God (at which

words he put off his hat) for bringing him into the promised land, where religion was purely professed, where he sat among grave, learned, and reverend men; not, as before elsewhere, a King without state, without honour, without order, where beardless boys would brave him to his face."

He assured the prelates that "he called not this assembly for any Innovation, acknowledging the government ecclesiastical, as it now is, to have been approved by manifold blessings from God Himself," but only to rectify such abuses and corruptions as had crept in during recent years. He said that—

"He had received many complaints since his first entrance into the kingdom, especially through the dissensions in the Church, of many disorders, as he heard, and much disobedience to the laws, with a great falling away to Popery: his purpose therefore was, like a good Physician, to examine and try the complaints, and fully

to remove the occasions thereof, if they prove scandalous, or to cure them if they were dangerous: or if but frivolous, yet to take knowledge of them, thereby to cast a sop into Cerberus's mouth, that he may never bark again: his meaning being, as he pleased to profess, to give factious spirits no occasion hereby of boasting or glory, for which cause he had called the Bishops in severally by themselves, not to be confronted by the contrary opponents, that if anything should be found meet to be redressed, it might be done (which his Majesty twice or thrice reiterated as occasion served) without any visible alteration."

The King then propounded sundry points in which he desired to be satisfied. We may take Dr. Montague's account as, on the whole, more trustworthy and much shorter than Barlow's.¹

"In the Prayer-book he [the King] named the General Absolution, the Confirmation of

¹ *Apud* Spedding, "Letters and Life of Francis Bacon," iii. p. 128.

Children, and the Private Baptism by Women. These three were long disputed between the King and the bishops. In the conclusion, the King was well satisfied in the two former, so that the manner might be changed, and some things cleared. For the private Baptism, it held three hours at least, the King alone disputing with the bishops, so wisely, wittily, and learnedly, with that pretty patience, as I think never man living heard the like. In the end he wan this of them, That it should only be administered by ministers, yet in private houses, if occasion required; and that whosoever else should baptize should be under punishment."

With respect to the bishops' jurisdiction, the King, following Bacon's lead, insisted on abolishing excommunication for trifling causes, and associating with the bishops in the exercise of their functions "some grave men to be assistants with them in all censures."

"These things done, he propounded matters whereabout he hoped there would be no controversy: as to have a learned ministry, and maintenance for them as far as might be. And for pluralities and non-residences, to be taken away, or at least made so few as possibly might be."

Thus ended the first day's proceedings. James had enjoyed himself immensely, and, on the whole, had shown to advantage. He was evidently very anxious to show the bishops and lords that the succession of learned sovereigns would be worthily maintained. The deference with which his harangues were received pleased him greatly: it was a new experience, and as agreeable as novel. Barlow¹ echoes the adulation of his colleagues when he describes the admiration which the King inspired—

¹ "Sum and Substance of the Conference," contracted by W. Barlow, Dean of Chester ("Phenix," vol. i. p. 139).

“Sending us away, not with contentment only, but astonishment: and which is pitiful you will say, with shame to us all, that a king brought up among Puritans, not the learnedst men in the world, and school'd by them: swaying a kingdom full of business and troubles, naturally given to much exercise and repast, should in points of Divinity show himself so expedite and perfect, that the greatest scholars, and most industrious students there present might not outstrip him. But this one thing I might not omit, ‘that his Majesty should profess, howsoever he lived among Puritans, and was kept for the most part as a Ward under them, yet since he was of the age of his Son, ten years old, he ever disliked their opinions; as the Saviour of the World said, Though He lived among them, He was not of them.’”

It augured ill for the Puritans that the King and the prelates were on such terms with one another that they could unite in abusing Puritanism.

On Monday, January 16, the Conference was resumed. On this occasion only two bishops, to be nominated by the Archbishop, were permitted to be present; but the Puritans gained little by the fact, since Whitgift nominated the Bishops of London and Winchester, their two most strenuous opponents.¹ The King opened the proceedings with a speech, which was on the whole conciliatory, and then called on the Puritans to state their case. The four ministers then knelt down, and Dr. Reynolds,

¹ "Upon Monday his Majesty appointed certain of the best learned of the preciser sort, to be before him in the Privy Chamber, to hear what they could object, viz. Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Sparke, Mr. Chatterton, and Mr. Knewstubbs. To whom his Highness used more shorte and round Speech. And admitted only two Bishops to be present, to be named by my Lord's Grace of Canterbury. Who sent thither the Bishops of London and Winchester; while we the rest were with him, setting down the form of the former points."—Matthew, *apud* Strype's "Whitgift," p. 237.

speaking for the rest, submitted four propositions—

1. That the doctrine of the Church might be preserved in purity according to God's Word.
2. That good pastors might be planted in all churches to preach the same.
3. That the Church government might be sincerely ministered according to God's Word.
4. That the Book of Common Prayer might be fitted to more increase of piety.

He then proceeded to explain and defend his propositions. He would have the Thirty-nine Articles amended in a Calvinist sense, and "the nine assertions orthodoxal, as he termed them, concluded upon at Lambeth," better known as the Lambeth Articles, inserted into that formulary. He instanced some other amendments in the Articles, which he thought necessary, especially instancing what he called

a contradiction between the Twenty-fifth Article, which seems to ascribe Confirmation to "the corrupt following of the Apostles," and the Confirmation Service, where the bishop's action is justified by the example of the Apostles. He had got thus far when he was rudely interrupted by Bancroft, Bishop of London, who kneeled down and prayed the King not to suffer longer speech from one who was schismatical and foresworn. This was too much even for James. He said—

"He misliked his [the Bishop's] sudden interruption of Dr. Reynolds, whom he should have suffered to have taken his course and liberty : concluding, that there is no order, nor can be any effectual issue of disputation, if each party might not be suffered, without chopping, to speak at large what he would. And therefore willed, that either the Doctor should proceed, or that the Bishop would frame his answer to these motions already made ;

altho', saith his Majesty, some of them are very needless."

This was the King's last appearance as an impartial chairman. Henceforward he plunged into the fray as an eager disputant against the Puritans. The Bishop of London divided with his sovereign the dubious honour of the unequal fight. The four ministers, thus overwhelmed by the irrelevant authority of their august opponent, and unprotected from the chair, made the best fight they could, but, not unnaturally, they failed to make the most of their case ; and their case, it must be admitted, was by no means as sound as they supposed. There will be no difference of opinion now as to the justice of the King's decision not to admit the Lambeth Articles into the Anglican Confession of Faith. The King was right in resisting the tendency to exaggerate theological

speculation at the expense of practical morality. He had an easy task in convicting the Puritans of narrowness and unreason, when they pressed for the prohibition of those innocent and eloquent ceremonies which the Church had inherited from the earliest ages of Christianity, and which were endeared to the people by many pious and tender associations. But what can be said of the insults which were gratuitously hurled at men who were in a minority, and at obvious disadvantage, and, none the less, representatives of a great multitude of the more religious people both in Scotland and England? Barlow relates, with a satisfaction which is sufficiently suggestive, that the discussion was interrupted by unseemly banter between the King and the lords. "A Puritan is a Protestant strayed out of his wits," was a gibe which hugely tickled the august company,

before whom the four ministers seemed to take a position more resembling that of prisoners before a bench of magistrates than that of fellows in an equal conference. One suggestion, however, of Dr. Reynolds's gained the royal approval, in spite of Bishop Bancroft's undisguised contempt. "He moved his Majesty that there might be a new 'translation of the Bible.'" The insolent bishop broke in with the remark that "if every man's humour should be followed, there would be no end of translating." But the King was otherwise minded. He had smarted under the personal applications to which the Genevan renderings had lent themselves in the hands of the Presbyterian preachers, and he was scholarly enough to recognize the importance of the proposal. The famous translation issued in 1611, and everywhere known as the "Authorized Version," owed its

existence to the Puritans. It was the worthiest result of the Hampton Court Conference.

Perhaps, to make amends to Bishop Bancroft for conceding anything to the minority, James accompanied his concession with a characteristic insult.

“‘Surely,’ he said, ‘if these be the greatest matters you be grieved with, I need not have been troubled with such importunities and complaints as have been made unto me : some other more private course might have been taken for your satisfaction :’ and withal, looking upon the Lords, he shook his head, smiling.”

Later in the day, Bancroft had his revenge. Barlow's narrative gives no clue as to the occasion which prompted his action. He was plainly determined to wreck the Conference ; at some pause in the discussion he saw his opportunity, and seized it. Falling on his knees,

he prayed permission to make some petitions in his turn.

“First, that there might be amongst us a praying ministry another while: for whereas there are in the ministry many excellent duties to be performed, as the absolving of the penitent, praying for and blessing of the people, administering of the Sacraments, and the like: it is come to that pass now, that some sort of men thought it the only duty required of a minister to spend the time in speaking out of a pulpit: sometimes, God wot, very indiscreetly and unlearnedly: and this with so great injury and prejudice to the Celebration of divine Service that some ministers would be content to walk in the Churchyard till sermon time, rather than be present at public prayer.”

We have good reason to know that preaching was unduly magnified at the expense of the other functions of the ministry, and individuals may have been guilty of the extravagant

conduct mentioned ; but Bancroft knew that he was uttering an injurious libel when he suggested that the Puritan party defended such conduct, and as a bishop he knew also that the worst offenders against reverence were not the Puritans. However, he gained his immediate purpose of raising prejudice against the ministers. The King liked the motion exceedingly well, "very acutely taxing the hypocrisy of our times, which placeth all religion in the ear, through which there is an easy passage." The bishop went on to urge his next request, "that till such time as learned and sufficient men might be planted in every congregation, that godly homilies might be read, and the number of them increased ; and that the opponents would labour to bring them into credit again, as formerly they brought them into contempt. 'Every man,' saith

he, 'that can pronounce well, cannot indite well.' "

Again it sounded plausible enough, and again the King was complacent ; but how injurious was the suggestion that the Puritans had set themselves to discredit the readers and the Homilies ! Nothing was said about the Elizabethan policy of silencing able ministers and substituting readers in their places : yet that was the essence of the Puritan complaint. Once more the bishop prayed "that pulpits might not be made pasquils, wherein every humorous or discontented fellow might traduce his superiors." Nothing could be more agreeable to James, always sensitive to political sermons, and not without cause. Bancroft having risen from his knees, this singular episode ended, and the Conference proceeded. Dr. Reynolds objected to the use of the

Apocrypha in church, and was answered by the bishops. The King seized the opportunity to air his learning by controverting the Puritan objection to the Book of Maccabees at considerable length, to the admiration of the prelates and lords. He concluded by bidding Dr. Reynolds send in to the Archbishop of Canterbury a list of such chapters as seemed to him offensive.

Mr. Knewstubs now took up the Puritan case, and advanced the objection to the questions in the Baptismal Service. The King, who now practically conducted the whole case for the Church, answered him at length. The minister pleaded for the omission of the cross in Baptism, as offensive to weak brethren. "How long will they be weak?" retorted James. "Are forty-five years not sufficient for them to grow strong? We do not require

subscription of laics and idiots, but preachers and ministers." It was an effective retort enough. Mr. Knewstubs was overwhelmed. But the King's success was limited to the Conference hall; in the country men only marked the discourtesy, and the refusal to yield even a small point. The discussion on the cross branched out into a considerable argument, in which the King, who was in his element, showed to advantage, while the Puritans, who had a bad case, cut a poor figure. Dr. Reynolds brought forward the familiar precedent of Hezekiah's destruction of the brazen serpent. The cross, abused in its turn idolatrously, should in like manner be abolished. The King replied with the argument that the abuse of anything does not destroy the lawful use.

"‘For my part,’ he said, ‘I know not how to answer the objection of the papists, when

they charge us with novelties, but truly to tell them, that their abuses are new, but the things which they abused we retain in their primitive use, and forsake only the novel corruption. By this argument we might renounce the Trinity, and all that is holy, because it was abused in Popery: and' (speaking to Dr. Reynolds, merrily) 'they used to wear hose and shoes in Popery, therefore you shall now go barefoot.'"

Again the King was unanswerable; but his success carried little conviction to men who, however absurdly they expressed their belief, were sure that the arch-enemy of English liberty was Popery, and who, we must add, at the time had good cause for their belief. After the cross came the surplice. "'It was a relic of heathenism,' said the doctors, 'a kind of garment which the priests of Isis used to wear.' 'Surely,' saith his Majesty, 'till of late I did not think that it had been borrowed from the

Heathen, because it is commonly termed a Rag of Popery.'” The formula in the Marriage Service, “With my body I thee worship,” the ring in marriage, the Churching of Women, were, in similar manner, mentioned and justified. The Conference had degenerated into a duel between the King and the ministers, fought out before the partial concourse of peers and prelates. James surrendered himself to the excitement and exultation of his controversial victory, and no longer regarded the limits of prudence or fair play. When Dr. Reynolds pleaded for the restoration of the prophesyings and the creation of an efficient, graduated system of ecclesiastical appeals from the rural deanery to the Episcopal Synod, he listened with impatience, and finally burst out in language of unkingly vehemence—

“‘Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me

and my Council, and all our proceedings : then Will shall stand up and say, "It must be thus : " then Dick shall reply, and say, "Nay, marry, but we will have it thus." And, therefore, here I must reiterate my former speech, *Le Roi s'avisera*. Stay, I pray you, for one seven years, before you demand that of me ; and if then you find me pursy and fat, and my wind-pipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you : for let that government be once up, I am sure I shall be kept in breath ; then shall we all of us have work enough, both our hands full. But, Dr. Reynolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone.' "

Mention had been made in the discussion of the royal supremacy ; James now, in his irritation against his controversial opponents, took up the point.

" 'Dr. Reynolds,' he said, 'you have often spoken for my supremacy : and it is well : but know you any here, or any elsewhere, who like of the present government ecclesiastical, that

find fault, or dislike my Supremacy?’ Dr. Reynolds said, ‘No.’ ‘Why, then,’ said his Majesty, ‘I will tell you a tale. After that the religion restored by King Edward the Sixth was soon overthrown by the Succession of Queen Mary here in England, we in Scotland felt the effect of it. Whereupon Mr. Knox writes to the Queen Regent (of whom, without flattery, I may say, that she was a vertuous and moderate lady), telling her, that she was supreme head of the Church: and charged her as she would answer it before God’s tribunal, to take care of Christ’s Evangel, and of suppressing the popish prelates, who withstood the same. But how long, trow ye, did this continue? Even so long, till by her authority the Popish bishops were repressed, he himself, and his adherents, were brought in and well settled, and by these means made strong enough to undertake the matters of reformation themselves. Then lo, they began to make small account of her Supremacy, nor would longer rest on her authority, but took the cause into their own hand, and according to that more light where-

with they were illuminated, made a further reformation of religion. How they used that poor lady, my mother, is not unknown, and with grief I may remember it: who, because she had not been otherwise instructed, did desire only a private Chapel, wherein to serve God after her manner, with some few selected persons: but her supremacy was not sufficient to obtain it at their hands: and how they dealt with me in my minority, you all know; it was not done secretly: and tho' I would I cannot conceal it. I will apply it thus.' And then putting his hand to his hat, his Majesty said, 'My lords the Bishops, I may thank you that these men do thus plead for my supremacy. They think they cannot make good their party against you, but by appealing unto it, as if you, or some that adhere unto you, were not well affected towards it. But if once you were out, and they in place, I know what would become of my supremacy. No Bishop, no King, as before I said. Neither do I thus speak at random without ground: for I have observed since my coming into England, that some

preachers before me can be content to pray for James, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith: but as for Supreme Governor in all causes and over all persons (as well ecclesiastical as civil), they pass that over with silence; and what cut they have been of, I after learned.’ ”

The King brought this astonishing outburst to an end by asking whether the ministers had anything more to object, to which they naturally answered in the negative. His last words were a threat of persecution. “ ‘If this be all,’ he said, as he rose to retire, ‘that they have to say, I shall make them conform themselves, or I will harry them out of this land, or else do worse.’ ” Barlow assures us that the King’s behaviour filled the peers and prelates with unbounded admiration. One of them said he was fully persuaded his Majesty spake by the instinct of the Spirit of God. Lord Cecil

thanked God for so wise a monarch, and the Lord Chancellor, as he passed out of the chamber, observed to Barlow that he had often read that *Rex est mixta persona cum sacerdote*, but he had never seen the truth thereof until that day.

So ended, amidst the plaudits of a servile hierarchy, the worst day's work that ever any monarch did for his own dynasty. James had purchased his controversial victory at a ruinous price, which would have to be paid, before many years had passed, by his hapless successor.

On Wednesday, January 18, the Conference reassembled for its final meeting. The Archbishop presented a list of the alterations in the Prayer-book, which had been agreed upon in the previous discussions. They were not many or serious. An explanatory phrase here and there, the prohibition of lay ministers of baptism, a

partial disuse of the Apocrypha—that was all. To offer the Puritans such changes as a satisfaction of their complaints was to add insult to injury.

Such as they were, the four ministers accepted them with gratitude, and the Conference proceeded to discuss the methods of the High Commission. The King again distinguished himself by an energetic defence of the *ex-officio* oath, which Lord Bacon had denounced as a manifest invasion of the liberties of Englishmen.¹ Again the prelates were full of admiration.

¹ Montague's account is the following: "The third day, which was Wednesday, the King assembled all the bishops (the Lords of the Council only being present), and took order how to have these things executed, which he had concluded ; that it might not be (as the King said) as smoke out of a tunnel, but substantially done to remain for ever. So they were debated to whom they might most fitly be referred, and by them made fit to be hereafter enacted by Parliament : so all the Bishops and

“The Archbishop of Canterbury said that undoubtedly his Majesty spake by the special assistance of God’s Spirit. The Bishop of London upon his knee protested, that his heart melted within him (as so, he doubted not, did the hearts of the whole company) with joy, and made haste to acknowledge unto Almighty God, the singular mercy we have received at his hands, in giving us such a King, as, since

all the Council have their parts given unto them. This being done, the Ministers were called in, Dr. Reynolds and the rest, and acquainted with what the King had concluded on. *They were all exceedingly well satisfied, but only moved one thing: That those ministers who were grave men and obedient unto the laws, and long had been exempted from the use of the ceremonies, might not upon the sudden be obliged unto them, but have some time given them to resolve themselves in using or not using them.* The King answered, his end being peace, his meaning was not that any man should be cruel in imposing those matters, but by time and moderation win all men unto them: those they found peaceable, to give some connivency to such, and to use their brethren, as he had used them, with meekness and gentleness, and do all things to the edification of God and His Church. So they ended these matters till the Parliament, and then these matters shall be enacted.”

Christ's time, the like, he thought, had not been : whereunto the lords with one voice did yield a very affectionate acclamation. The civilians present confessed, that they could not in many hours warning, have so judicially, plainly, and accurately, and in such a brief described it."

The ministers pleaded for some indulgence in the matters of the vestments and ceremonies in the case of the ministers in Lancashire and Suffolk, and the King seemed disposed to yield, but again the Bishop of London intervened to hinder any concession to Puritanism ; and indulgence was limited in the one district and roughly refused in the other. The last word in the Conference was the bishop's.

"My Lord of London ended all, in the name of the whole company, with a thanksgiving unto God for his Majesty, and a prayer for the health and prosperity of his Highness, our

gracious Queen, the young prince, and all their royal issue."

Fuller states that Barlow's account, which is the only detailed and connected narrative of the Conference which has come down to us, was objected against by the Puritans as an unfair presentment of the facts. It must be admitted that the ministers had very little to say for themselves ;¹ that the King unquestionably had the best of the argument ; and that the Puritan case was distinctly weakened by the manner in which it was set out. We cannot doubt that Barlow was a thorough-going partisan, but the course of the proceedings was too much to his taste to necessitate any serious manipulation of the facts, and the account he

¹ Montague also notices the weakness of the Puritans : "And truly the Doctors argued but weakly against them [*i.e.* the ceremonies], so that all wondered they had no more to say against them."

gives carries the stamp of truth on its face. Probably he suppressed rather than altered or added to his materials. On the opening day, when the King had not yielded to the seduction of successful controversy, but seemed bent on playing an honest and independent part, there is evidence that he spoke with considerable energy on the abuses of the Church, and greatly alarmed the prelates. Andrewes, then Dean of Westminster, is reported to have said that "for five hours his Majesty did wonderfully play the Puritan."

Mr. Patrick Galloway, Minister of Perth, who had accompanied the King into England, and was present at the Conference, wrote an account of the proceedings to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which confirms this report.¹ He

¹ Calderwood, "Historie of the Kirk of Scotland," vol. vi. p. 241.

represents the King as controverting the episcopal assurances that all was well, "in great fervencie."

"The bishops," he says, "upon their knees, with great earnestnesse, craved that nothing sould be altered, least the Popish recusants punished by penall statuts for their disobedience, and the Puritan punished by deprivation from calling and living, for non-conformitie, sould say, they had just caus to insult upon them, as men who had travelled to bind them to that which, by their owne mouths, now was confessed to be erroneous. Alwise, after five houres dispute had by his Majestie against them, and his Majestie's resolution for reformatioun intimated to them, they were dismissed that day."

Barlow was himself present on that first day, but it is evident, from Galloway's statement, that the prelates were anxious to conceal the outspoken censures of the King. On the other

hand, it is clear that Galloway thought meanly of the performance of the ministers. He says that they answered "verie louslie and coldlie."

Calderwood states that when Galloway's letter was read to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Mr. James Melvill, the leading minister in Scotland, rising amid general silence, moved two resolutions, the one of condolence with the Puritans, the other of vigilance in Scotland, "that no perrell or contagioun come from our neighbours' kirk." In England the result of the Conference was not immediately apparent. For the moment the victory of the bishops seemed complete. The force of the Crown would still, as heretofore, be at their disposal. The discovery of the King's religious preferences had no small influence on the numerous class to whom Puritanism was less a matter of conscience than of desire.

“Henceforward,” says Fuller, “many cripples in conformity were cured of their former halting therein : and such who knew not their own till they knew the King’s mind in this matter, for the future quietly digested the ceremonies of the Church.”

The bishops were not slow to follow up their victory. The old Archbishop of Canterbury, Whitgift, died within a few weeks of the Conference, and the leadership of the Church passed wholly into the hand of Bishop Bancroft, the bitterest enemy of the Puritans, whose zeal for the Church had disdained to respect either the decencies of discussion or the dictates of equity. He passed from the Conference, where he had trampled on his opponents, to the Convocation, where he organized and stereotyped the fruits of victory. The primacy being vacant, he presided as Bishop of London, and carried through the famous canons, which still remain the law

of the Church of England. These canons destroyed the last hopes of the Puritans. They were so framed as to leave no loophole for evasion, and for every disobedience they prescribed the extreme penalty of excommunication. To hold that there was anything superstitious in the Prayer-book (canon 4), or erroneous in the Thirty-nine Articles (canon 5), was to be *ipso facto* excommunicated. These rules could have no other object than to drive the Puritans out of the Church; but other canons severely prohibited separation. It was sufficiently clear that the petulant exclamation of the King described the deliberate policy of the hierarchy. The Puritans were to be harried out of the land. But would the canons be enforced? All doubt on that point vanished when Bancroft was chosen to succeed Whitgift in the primacy. He was then sixty years old,

and for the best part of his life he had waged war with Puritanism. His famous sermon at St. Paul's Cross on February 9, 1589, marks an epoch in the history of the English Church. On that occasion he had asserted with uncompromising distinctness the Divine Right of Episcopacy. Presbyterianism was not merely an inferior and illegal form of Church government : it was contrary to the ordinance of Christ, an intrinsically evil thing. Now, whatever may be the merits of such a view, it seems to be certain that it was novel doctrine in the Reformed Church of England. Hitherto English Churchmen had associated on equal terms with other Protestants. They had never dreamed of disputing the validity of the foreign Ordinations. Henceforward, under the influence of Bancroft and the Churchmen of his school, the Church of England would deliberately choose

and jealously maintain a position of ecclesiastical isolation. Bancroft had thrown himself with zeal into the warfare against Puritanism. He ferreted out the printers of the Marprelate Tracts, and directed their prosecution before the Star-Chamber. He was credited with the disgraceful notion of answering those scurrilous attacks on the hierarchy by tracts written in the same scurrilous vein. As chaplain to Archbishop Whitgift, he had taken a leading part in the proceedings against Barrow, Cartwright and other Puritans of consequence. In 1593 he had published two notable works against the Puritans. In the one, "A Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline," he vigorously criticized their ecclesiastical views; in the other, "Dangerous Positions and Proceedings published and practised within the Island of Britain under Pretence of Reformation," he

stamped on his opponents the character of sedition and treason. His behaviour at the Hampton Court Conference sufficiently indicates the strength of his prejudices and the infirmities of his temper. The six years of his primacy were devoted to the suppression of Puritanism. Almost his first act was to issue a circular to the bishops, requiring them to enforce the canons. It is calculated that about three hundred of the clergy were ejected for refusing to comply with the demands made upon them.

What, it may be asked, was the ultimate effect of the triumph of militant Anglicanism at the accession of the Stuart dynasty? We may, perhaps, answer that it definitely secured the distinctiveness of the English Church on the one hand, and drove the Puritans into a close alliance with the democratic element in the

constitution on the other. Protestantism would henceforward become in England identified with ecclesiastical disaffection and organized Dissent. The National Church would harden its attitude and sharply define its boundaries. The historic Catholic elements in the reformed Church would be emphasized, insisted upon, and developed. The temper of ecclesiastical self-assertion would grow at the expense of religious unity and political strength. But there would be substantial compensations. Puritanism had no intellectual promise. The history of Christianity had neither interest nor value in the eyes of men who repudiated the authority of the Fathers, and laid down the principle that "whatever is not contained in the Word is burdensome to the conscience of Christians, who are set at liberty by Christ." Puritanism, moreover, trampled on the æsthetic

sense. There was sentence of death on religious art involved in their contention that "whatsoever is brought into the service of God by the authority of human tradition, and not by the Word of God, ought to be rejected." While, therefore, we condemn the principal actors in the Hampton Court Conference, and lament the unnecessary violences which their short-sighted bigotry entailed on the Church, we cannot regret the defeat of Puritanism.

For the moment the hierarchy was supreme in dependence on the King. The Church had definitely linked her cause to the monarchy. The Puritans betook themselves to the Parliament. Shrewd observers even then discerned the formidable possibilities of the House of Commons. Few could suspect that within less than fifty years the monarchy would have fallen, and dragged the Church down in its fall.

Or ought we to reverse the sentence, and say that the Church dragged down the monarchy? Certainly it is significant that the royal saint of Anglicanism was also the victim of his exasperated subjects. The association of Puritanism with democratic politics has become traditional. Dissent is a political force. The "Nonconformist conscience" is a factor in current politics. The explanation must be sought in the circumstances under which Puritanism was violently thrust out of the national ecclesiastical organization, which it threatened to subvert. King James and Bishop Bancroft were unconsciously the founders of political Dissent, as truly as the nursing fathers of the Anglican Church. May we not say that in both characters they ministered, with whatever personal unworthiness, to the strength and richness of the national life?



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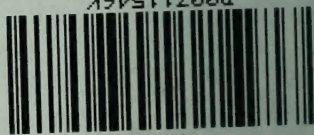
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